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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - CHAVEZ' PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

11. On August 17, government-owned, editorially independent "La Nacion" (circ. 4,200) carried a column by international analyst Raul Sohr entitled "Chavez on the Offensive." Quote:

12. "A seven-year presidential term with the possibility of immediate reelection -- as easy as that," concluded Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez when he announced his proposals for constitutional reform....

This would impose his will for a unique and centered leadership in the leader of the Bolivarian movement.... What is new in this situation...is that, by utilizing democratic (tools), he proposes reforms that rupture economic and political structures. Until now, all changes have been submitted to popular consultation and have counted with clear support. Under those circumstances, to disqualify the authoritarianism of a regime is debatable, especially if it obtains a majority in electoral processes that international observers declare valid. This is what allows the Venezuelan President to proclaim: Vox Populi, Vox Dei."

YAMAUCHI